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Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

7 May 2009

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Implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision on "principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament"

Report submitted by Australia to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons underpins the international community's shared and enduring interest in realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. The Treaty remains essential to international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and advance the process of nuclear disarmament. Universality remains a key objective. Australia calls upon the countries yet to join the Treaty to accede as non-nuclear-weapon States.

2. Australia welcomes the substantial cuts made by some nuclear-weapon States to their nuclear arsenals. Especially welcome were the stated commitments of the United States of America and the Russian Federation to pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons and their agreement to conclude a legally binding and verifiable successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) before that treaty expires in December 2009. Australia's view is that any successor to START should contain irreversible reductions in all kinds of nuclear weapons, and a strong verification regime, and should clearly lay out a path to further disarmament. France's announcement of further cuts to its nuclear arsenal to under 300 nuclear warheads, or half the level of its cold war height, and the announcement by the United Kingdom that it had reduced its operationally available warheads to fewer than 160 weapons were also warmly welcomed by Australia.

3. Australia, however, believes that there is much more that nuclear-weapon States can do to fulfil their obligations under article VI, cognizant of the fact that this must occur in ways that buttress rather than weaken international peace and security. Nuclear-weapon States must reaffirm their disarmament commitments under the Treaty. This includes those made at previous review conferences such as the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. Australia realizes that a few of

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these steps are no longer relevant — such as those referring to START II and III — but most remain as relevant today as in 2000. Nuclear-weapon States that have not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must do so and all nuclear-weapon States should actively work towards its entry into force. In addition, all nuclear-weapon States should strive for the commencement of negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

4. Australia encourages all nuclear-weapon States to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies through transparency and confidence-building measures. We also look to all nuclear-weapon States to pursue further reductions in the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems in ways that promote international stability and security, and to de-target their nuclear missiles.

5. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, Australia has contributed to nuclear disarmament by working in multilateral forums for progress on the elimination of nuclear weapons as well as through our bilateral relationships, urging nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their article VI commitments. We have also judged ourselves by the highest standards in terms of our compliance with our own non-proliferation commitments and obligations.

6. The strongest contribution Australia has made to the cause of nuclear disarmament over the last 12 months has been the establishment, with Japan, of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. The Commission, an independent global panel co-chaired by former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Mr. Gareth Evans, and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, aims to reinvigorate the global effort to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to secure further advances in nuclear disarmament. The Commission operates with strong support from both Governments but takes an independent approach. Comprised of eminent persons from across the world and supported by many of the finest minds in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the Commission has already held two highly successful meetings in Sydney and Washington, D.C. and the first of a series of regional meetings in Santiago. These meetings have produced a nascent pathway to change the formulaic and unproductive nature of much of the current international nuclear debate between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, developed and developing countries and parties and non-parties to the Treaty. Further Commission meetings are planned in the next months in Moscow and Hiroshima, Japan, and regional meetings in Beijing, Delhi and Cairo. The Commission's first major report, due by early next year, can hopefully make an important contribution to the work of the Treaty Review Conference in May 2010. The work of the Commission will continue after the Review Conference towards the end of next year, assessing and responding to progress made at the Conference and further developments.

7. Australia strongly supports the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and we continue to urge countries yet to sign or ratify, especially annex II countries and those in the Asia-Pacific region, to do so without delay. In this context, Australia welcomed Colombia's ratification of the Treaty as an annex II State earlier this year, bringing to nine the number of additional annex II States necessary to bring the treaty into force. Australia, Mexico and New Zealand formed the core group that put forward the resolution adopted at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, which stressed the fundamental importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban

Treaty to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and urged all States that have not yet signed the Treaty to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. Australia is an active participant in development of the verification system for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and welcomes the continued progress being made, especially in relation to the international monitoring system. Australia expects to host the third highest number of international monitoring system facilities (after the United States of America and the Russian Federation) in the near future.

8. Australia remains committed to negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on the basis of the Shannon mandate (CD/1299 of 1995). Negotiation of such a treaty was a recommendation of both the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. As one of the Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2009, Australia is working closely with the other five presidents and members of the Conference to ensure that the Conference agrees to start negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty this year, within the context of an agreement on a balanced programme of work. We welcome renewed commitments to negotiate a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty as a priority of the Conference and look forward to cooperative efforts by all States to bring these negotiations to a successful conclusion.

9. In its role as one of the presidents of the 2009 session of the Conference on Disarmament, Australia is taking an active role in trying to build consensus on a practical, balanced programme of work. We urge all members of the Conference on Disarmament to put their weight behind the efforts of the 2009 Presidents to achieve a programme of work.

10. Effective non-proliferation is crucial to a climate conducive to nuclear disarmament. Compliance with non-proliferation commitments, including those under this treaty, will be crucial to achieving this climate.

Outreach and regional assistance

11. Australia regularly participates in workshops and seminars in countries of the region on agreements such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Additional Protocol. Australia is also working with countries of the region on practical outreach in key areas such as export controls, nuclear security and safeguards training, all of which support a political climate conducive to disarmament.